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Gunmen kill girl, 11, abduct brother

CHINEDU WOSU, *Port Harcourt*

Unidentified gunmen yesterday shot dead an 11-year old girl, Miss Oduaye Awolesu and kidnapped her nine-year old younger brother, Master Emmanuel in Port Harcourt, the Rivers state capital.

The gunmen, struck four days after kidnappers abducted Rev Father Pius Kii last Sunday, though the cleric regained his freedom yesterday morning.

The Catholic Priest who was abducted, while driving out from the church compound on Sagana Street was set free after appeals by the Catholic community in the state.

The abductors who demanded N3 million before releasing the cleric later set him free without any ransom.

The state police command which confirmed the latest incident said the victims, were abducted, Thursday morning, while going to school at Rumuokwuta village in the heart of the state capital.

Police named the girl as Oduayo Awonusi. Her brother Emmanuel is nine.

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"The gunmen came out of the vehicle and grabbed the boy," Rita Inoma-Abbey, police spokeswoman for Rivers State said.

"While the sister was struggling with them, she was shot. The gunmen went away with the boy. Passers-by rushed the girl to hospital but she died on the road."

The command's spokesperson, Mrs. Rita Abbey, said in Port Harcourt: "While the gunmen abducted the boy, they shot and killed his 11-year-old sister and drove away.

"The state commissioner of police, Mr. Bala Hassan, and senior officers of the command were at the scene of the incident to personally investigate it," he said.

Abbey said details were still sketchy but promised to give more information when the commissioner returned.

The armed men, who shot sporadically dispersing passers-by stormed the home of Mr. Awolesu, a staff of an oil firm in the city and abducted the little boy and killed his sister.

The children, our correspondent learnt, were getting ready for school when the gunmen struck.

Eyewitness said the kidnappers had arrived the family compound and abducted the little Emmanuel and shot the sister in the head.

It was gathered that hours after the killing and abduction, neighbours alerted the police which deployed armed guards to the scene.

But no ransom has been demanded by the abductors even as their motive was not ascertained as at press time.

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